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Contra Aid

Editor: At his White House press conference last November, Attorney General Edwin Meese disclosed prohibited assistance to the contras who are trying to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. Mr. Meese was asked if he had directed the FBI to investigate. Presenting himself as a civil libertarian, Mr. Meese stated that in the absence of reason to suspect any law violation it is wrong for the FBI to conduct any investigation. He stated also that FBI Director William Webster concurred in what he had just said.

As the attorney general and the FBI director know, the FBI has always made many investigations that have no law enforcement purpose, some enormous in extent. Moreover, the FBI is authorized to make investigations at the request of the president. In his testimony before the Warren Commission investigating the assassination of President John Kennedy, Director J. Edgar Hoover testified that, "the president has a right to request the bureau to make special investigations . . ." If ever a president needed such an investigation, President Reagan did.

And, I suggest, if ever an attorney general or FBI director ought have so informed any president, absent an intent to deceive and cover up, this attorney general and this FBI director should have informed President Reagan. If he did not already know.

Current testimony about this Iran/contra scandal makes it apparent that during the time Mr. Meese saw to it that there was no FBI investigation, Colonel North had what he described as his "shredding party" when he fed records into the White House shredding machine.

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